

PROCEEDING OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF
M/S VEDANTA ALUMINIUM LIMITED FOR ITS EXPANSION OF ALUMINA REFINERY
FROM 1.0 MTPA TO 6.0 MTPA ON 25.04.2009 AT 10 A.M.
AT: VILLAGE BELEMBA (OPPOSITE VAL SWITCH YARD), LANJIGARH,
DISTRICT KALAHANDI.

At the outset, Er. P.C.Rauta, Regional Officer, State pollution Control Board, Rayagada welcomed all the persons assembled in the hearing. He stated that M/s Vedanta Aluminium Limited has proposed for its expansion of Alumina Refinery from 1 MTPA to 6 MTPA. He also briefed about the importance of public hearing in the environment clearance process. Then he requested the Additional District Magistrate, Kalahandi, Sri Chudamani Seth(O.A.S-I (S.B), to kindly preside and supervise in the public hearing.

The Additional District Magistrate welcomed the people for attending the hearing. He briefed about the project and elaborated the objective of conducting public hearing. Then he asked representative of M/s Vedanta Aluminium Limited to give the detail description on the project.

Dr Mukesh Kumar, Chief Operating Officer M/s Vedanta Aluminium Limited explained the detail of proposed expansion of alumina refinery from 1 MTPA to 6 MTPA. Then he presented the salient features of the project, the present status of environmental conditions, and the remedial measures to be undertaken by the proponent to reduce the impact while executing the project.

Then Sri Chudamani Seth, Additional District Magistrate, Kalahandi invited the public to offer their views, objections, opinions, comments and suggestions regarding the proposed expansion of Alumina Refinery specifically relating to environmental issues. Thereafter the following persons took part in the hearing and spoke on different issues related to the proposed expansion of Alumina Refinery.

About 400 persons were present in the public hearing meeting. However, only 117 persons signed in the attendance sheet and 27 persons spoke in the hearing. Their statements recorded are as follows.

1. Name:Lada Majhi (Sibaji Majhi),Village:Lakhapadar

Saluting the people present, he said about the Niyamgiri hills. He said that the hill is their mother as they are depending on the hill for the livelihood. He questioned the authorities whether they can afford to pay 5 lakh rupees for each tree of lemon, turmeric, etc. He further claimed that the government should not compromise with the foreign company. Even if all accepts the Niyamgiri project but the villagers will never agree on that and they will never allow to operate "Niyam giri danagar(mine)".

2. Name:Sri Manoj Kumar Mahapatra,Village:Bandhaguda

He addressed the people present in the hearing. He said that they have welcomed the project since 2003. He informed that M/s VAL has acquired land from Kinari village, Bandhaguda village Barbhota village Kothadwar village. After taking the land VAL never looked for their development. He questioned why the authorities are neglecting them and the reason behind it. He informed that their village is very close to the unit and the unit is polluting the surrounding. He requested the authority to visit their area to assess the pollution caused by the unit. He intimated that they will stage Andolon if the VAL treats the villagers as in prior to expansion. He said that if VAL treats the fellow villagers as their own, then they will support the unit.

3. Name:Sri Subash Dandasana, Village:Bandhaguda.

He welcomed the project and informed that they have given in writing to SPCB about the pollution caused by the unit. But the Board has informed that M/s VAL has installed necessary pollution control equipments but they didn't see any results. In this regard they have drawn the attention of the Sarapanch, Collector, R.D.C and Chief Minister also but nobody has listened to us. He questioned why Government is so ignorant.

4. Name:Sri Bimbadhar Pradhani, Village:Bandhaguda

He informed that M/s VAL has acquired 80 acres of land from him but has given employment to only one of his sons and rest two sons are still unemployed. Due to noise pollution caused by the unit they cannot sleep properly. Water become muddy due to dust pollution. In this regard government is not listening to them.

5. Name: Sri Abhi HarijanVillage: Bandhaguda

He stated that since 2003 onwards, their village Bandhaguda is in great trouble and they are suffering a lot due to the company activity. He informed that the company has acquired most of their land leaving only 15 to 20 houses in an area of 72 decimel. They have informed the company about the problem they are facing due to dust and mosquitoes. But company is putting deaf ear to their problems. He requested the company to displace and rehabilitate their village as per the R&R policy 2006 notification of Government of Orissa.

6. Name: Sri Kumud Chandra Mahakud Village: Bandhaguda

He informed that their lands have been acquired by VAL. They are facing a lot of problem due to dust from the road and ash from chimney. It has become very difficult to live in the village due to severe sound pollution also. He informed that VAL never sprinkles water on the road. But today they sprinkled water as the pollution Control Board authorities have visited the area . Though his land has been acquired by the company but his son has not been employed by the unit as promised. However he supports the company if employment is given to them.

7. Name: Sri Sridhar Pesnia, Village: Lanjigarh

He welcomed the Project and he informed that pollution is caused by the unit .But now it is more than 5 times due to expansion. He stated that not only Bandhguda village but all villages around the company is suffering from pollution. Other than pollution, there are some other problems also. Muniguda people are given preference but not Lanjigarh people for contract job. There are pollution due to water, air and moving vehicle on the road. He added that crime activities have also started in the locality. He stressed that some development will be come up if the expansion starts. Further, he informed that due to lack of communication among local and VAL authorities, they are spared from all the facilities given by the VAL.

8. Name: Sri Lingaraj Majhi, Village: Lanjigarh

He stated that after taking the land, VAL promised to give employment but they did not keep the promise. Even, construction contract work are also not given to them. He told that they gave their land to get something but the unit did not give anything. Further he stated that their village seems to be an Island for them as red mud ponds surrounds their village.He requested to displace their village as per the government rule and give employment to the villagers.

9. Name: Sri Patra Majhi, Village: Rengapalli.

He stated that VAL forgot all the promises it has made. Further he said that due to belt line and red mud pond, a lot of dust is generating which comes to their food plate. Their children stay at Basantapada hostel. This road to the hostel is also closed. He pointed out that no development work has been done for the roads. He said that they supported to VAL but VAL has forgotten all the promises it has made. He said that VAL has only constructed 200 meter concrete road, one Tube well which is not giving good water. They expect support from VAL.

10. Name: Sri Trinath Mahakud, Village Lanjigarh

He stated that flow of water to their area has come down due to establishment of red mud pond. He requested to provide rehabilitation as per the 2006 notification of State Government. Further he also requested to give employment to the unemployed local people.

11. Name: Sri Laxmidhar Chandi, Village: Lanjigarh

He said that their main problem is pollution and the surrounding villages are also affected due to pollution. Since 2003 they are welcoming the project. But they have not been compensated suitably. Further he pointed out that mostly outsiders are getting more preference. However, they are welcoming the expansion project but with a condition to provide them employment.

12. Name: Sri Chandra Dhawja Pesnia, Ex-Sarapanch Village: Lanjigarh

VAL is operating in Batelima G.P. There is little peripheral development done by VAL in that area. He raised certain questions to VAL as well as pollution Control Board officials. He wanted to know from SPCB, Rayagada the life of Bauxite mine and alumina refinery on account of expanded capacity of the Refinery operation. The agricultural support extended by VAL during the period from 2003- 2009 is not satisfactory. He also stated his disagreement on the policy of handing over of Lanjigarh Govt. Hospital to any NGOs. He wants the Hospital to be managed by Government. He informed that many discussions have been done with VAL on the matter of unemployment but no result. He quoted the promise made by VAL on the matter of providing employment on the occasion of Republic Day which is not implemented. He is questioning the authority whether VAL can afford a compensation of Rs.1 lakhs against a turmeric tree. He stated that Supreme Court has directed VAL to spend Rs 11 crores per year for the development of Tribals and he wanted to know how much has been spent on them till now. He is ready to support the company if locals are supported. The people of lanjigarh must be employed. Further he added that the local people are affected by various diseases viz. TB, diarrhea and other skin diseases due to pollution. He requested authority to look into the problems of the surrounding villages and make facilities to rehabilitate the villagers.

13. Name: Sri Basudev Sahu Village: Sindhibahal

Since inception of VAL, VAL is only taking care of Ministers, VIPs, and Big leaders except us. He further stated that the authority is not visiting their village to look after their problem. VAL is giving only false promises.

14. Name: Swapneswar Saha Village: Kapaguda

VAL is not helping us in spite of written complaints. However he stated that they will support VAL if employment is provided and sacrifice their land if their needs are fulfilled.

15. Name: Chinmay Samal Village: Bartelima

Some development work has been done in the Batelima G.P but some are remaining unaddressed till date. They will support only when VAL looks after their problems and fulfills their needs. They must be rehabilitated as per R& R policy 2006 on acquisition of land.

16. Name: Raghu Majhi Village : Belamba

I have given in writing and hence I will not speak. Villagers must be rehabilitated as per R& R policy 2006 on acquisition of land.

17. Name: Kalendri Majhi Village: Belemba:

He welcomed the project.

18. Name :Sri Dayasingh Majhi, Village: Belemba:

He said that they gave mother land to VAL but till date they have not got anything from VAL. He emphasized that the unit must give in writing about the facility to be provided to them. He informed that they have been arrested on false cases.

19 Name: Sri Jagadish Benia Village: Vice-Chairman, Lanjigarh:

He welcomed the project. He stated that even they have visited New Delhi in support of establishment of VAL but now VAL ignores them. He informed that they will be forced to go against the VAL if it ignores them. They are in support of the plant and hence he requested to the plant proponent to fulfill all the promises made by the unit on Independence Day and Republic day. He also emphasized that if VAL listen to their demands then they will fight for VAL. He also said that as vice chairman of the Panchayat samiti , he will also help the unit proponent for Niyamgiri mines if their demands is fulfilled.

20. Name: Sri Senapati Nayak, Ex Zilla Parishad Member, Chatrapur

He said that he will speak only about the pollution caused by the Unit not on other topics. He told that they along with officials of SPCB visited the various spots and collected water samples. During their earlier visit, the officials advised not to use the contaminated water as the water is polluted. He emphasized that VAL authorities are giving false informations as they are all uneducated and innocent. However he requested the VAL authorities to rehabilitate Chatrapur village.

21 Name: Sri Ananta Pal, Village Chatrapur

He told that they repeatedly informed the SPCB officials and Superintendent of Police and Collector regarding the pollution caused by the unit. But they did not get any positive response from the authorities. Further they informed that the SPCB officials have said that the water is polluted and later the officials informed that the water is not polluted. Hence he wanted to get him clarified whether the water is polluted or not. He said that they are not against the VAL but they requested to rehabilitate them as per the R & R policy 2006

Government Policy to the affected people. He also requested the VAL authorities to provide employment as per the qualification of the local people as promised by the VAL earlier. Further, he added that the tube wells are dried up and the ash pond pipe was cut off which contaminated the river water. He also said that the affected people shall be rehabilitated and medical facilities should be provided as they can't afford more on the Seven Hill Hospital being sponsored by VAL and requested not to replace the Government hospital.

22 Name: Padman Majhi Vill: Basantapada

He said that due to pollution the land of Basantapada village become unsuitable for agriculture, hence necessary compensation should be given to the affected people.

23. Name: Sarat Chandra Samal, Village: Basantapada

He asked the authorities to visit the area as the area is highly polluted. No peripheral development is carried out by the Company. Water sprinkling along the road is not adequate. He also informed that due to pollution local people are suffering from T.B Asthma Malaria which was not severe earlier. He also informed that they are not able to reach the concerned authorities to put their grievances in contrast to earlier occasions. He also stated that sending their children to the DAV school sponsored by VAL is not within their reach for the poor fellow like him. He also stated that local educated people are still unemployed and outsiders are getting the benefits. He also informed that number of cases of malaria has been increased and now become incurable. He stressed on the requirement of widening of the Road as the roads are narrow and the dust generation is high during the plying of vehicles. He desired that dust suppression measures along the road shall be carried out seriously. He appealed to the Representative of the industry to work in coordination of all instead of taking into confidence of only few.

24. Name: Sri Kumuti Majhi, Village: Sindhibali

He stated that he gave everything to the VAL but still they are neglected. Whenever they raise the objection they are booked on false cases.

25 Name Sri Sidhartha Naik, Pratapur

He opposed the expansion of the unit. No record is available with respect to pollution, on death cases and rising no of diseases in the offices of pollution control board. Even he doubts if any record is available with the board with respect to the maximum production capacity of alumina refinery at a single location and he stated that it is 3.5MTPA. Thus he questioned the legitimacy of application for 6 MTPA. Even he asked the State Pollution Control board if they can certify the drinking quality of river water by drinking themselves in the public hearing. He also stated that the death cases have not been available in hospital also.

26. Name Satya Mahar, Village: Bhawanipatna

He stated that the unit has carried out 25% of development work as committed. He also stated that the displaced has not been properly rehabilitated. He did not agree the development work done by the company stating that a number of death cases have been occurred due to pollution caused by the industry; no employment has been given to the educated youth; mining activity lead to deforestation. Even he told that there is no scope for employment of uneducated mass. It is a fact that all displaced cannot be employed by the company. With this he opposed the project and appealed to the people to rise for the cause.

27. Name: Giridhar Patra, Village Bhawanipatna.

He said that no employment has been given to the locals. If given to locals they are employed as labourers. He told the public that land and forest is forever for them but money is only for temporary which can be spent on short time. They have sacrificed their land but no livelihood or employment has given by the company. Even the company only will operate for limited duration.

CONCLUSION: The last participant raised certain remarks against some local persons by name and hence surrounding villges objected to his remarks and they got agitated. There was some anticipation of law and order situation and hence the hearing was declared as concluded and closed by Chairperson.

Later the proponent was asked to give his comments in writing the different apprehensions expressed by the public and his written comments are enclosed.

The overall opinion of the public about the project was favorable provided the proponent takes care of their issues.

Sri P.C.Rauta, Regional Officer, State Pollution Control Board, Rayagada & representative of State Pollution Control Board, Orissa prepared the summary of the public hearing proceedings accurately reflecting the views and concerns expressed by the oral deliberators. The statement of issues and concerns of public with the comments of the representative of the project proponent, prepared in Oriya and English Language is annexed separately.

(Er. P.C.Rauta)

Regional Officer,

State Pollution Control Board, Rayagada

(Assisted as representative of

State Pollution Control Board)

(Sri Chudamani Seth, O. A. S.-I (SB))

Additional District Magistrate, Kalahandi

(Presided and Supervised

the public Hearing meeting)